



2022

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022





Midlas acknowledges that we work on the traditional lands of the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation and we pay our respects to Elders past and present. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, spiritual beliefs and relationship to land and waters. We extend this respect to other Aboriginal Language Groups and other First Nations.

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IN APPRECIATION

The audited financial statements have not been included in this version of the annual report. A copy can be obtained by contacting us, or it can be viewed on The Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission website

## Vision

Building Resilient Communities

## Mission

We partner with individuals and organisations to promote independence, strength and wellbeing in our community through support, advocacy, and education

## Values

### Caring for People

This is at the heart of all we do, central to our drive and motivation

### Developing Partnerships

We form partnerships with both individuals and with other organisations to maximise our reach and impact

### Supporting our Community

We go out into the community to inform, educate and raise awareness to enable people to address social issues before they reach crisis

Cover artwork created by Aboriginal Artist Wiló depicting Midlas community services



# ABOUT MIDLAS

Midlas is a not-for-profit accredited community legal centre with offices in Midland and Ellenbrook to people predominately in the North East Metro region of Perth.

Midlas offers a range of free, inclusive and accessible services for eligible clients including disability advocacy, financial counselling, tenancy advocacy, legal services, community engagement and outreach.

Supporting people in our community for over three decades, Midlas has a long-standing strong commitment to improving lives and building resilience.



**midlas**  
building resilience

“ Thank you with all my heart for your assistance, I couldn't have got to this freedom without you.

(Client, Midlas) ”

Midlas is a not for profit community organisation, with Public Benevolent Institution and Deductible Gift Recipient status.





# GOVERNANCE



## 2022 Midlas Board of Management



### **SIMON KIMBER** BOARD CHAIR

Simon has a M.B.A. and over 20 years experience in business operations, marketing and general management in the private sector.



### **JOSEPH HOE** DIRECTOR

Joseph is a Senior Financial Adviser with Wealthwise and is a member of CPA (Australia), SMSF Specialist from the SMSF Association and a Certified Financial Planner.



### **MERISSA VAN DER LINDEN** DEPUTY CHAIR

Merissa has over 20 years experience in the disability sector. She has held senior leadership positions in large agencies, leading quality assurance and continuous improvement, management of safety and risk, and building the capability of teams to deliver meaningful outcomes.



### **DEEPAK SHARMA** TREASURER

Deepak has 20 years of experience working in Infrastructure Advisory and Project Finance across Australia, Middle East and India. He has worked with credit rating agencies, financial institutions and a corporate bank prior to his current role in the Strategic Performance group at Water Corporation.



### **JANE DAVIES** SECRETARY

Jane is a marketing and commercial leader with over 25 years' experience in the commercial, not-for-profit and government sectors. Jane also spent many years working with Aboriginal communities, families and individuals, assisting them to develop their business aspirations.



### **REG YARRAN** DIRECTOR

Reg is an experienced Advisor with a demonstrated history of working in the environmental services industry. Skilled in Non-profit Organisations, Business Planning, Coaching, Government, and Event Management.



## BOARD CHAIR'S REPORT

### SIMON KIMBER

#### OUR YEAR

The 2021-2022 year has showcased the great resilience of our staff and our organisation as Covid has continued to play a part on the global stage. Although the fiscal outlook for State Government has improved with record surpluses it is important the government recognise that the disenfranchised in our community have not gained a corresponding benefit and are being left further behind as many coinciding global events effect us at a local level. This in turn places significant pressure on Midlas, its staff and resources.

We look forward to continuing to progress partnerships with individuals and organisations that share our values. Pooling collective knowledge and resources, reducing administrative costs and highlighting systemic issues that threaten the resilience of our community is critical to our sector. It is only by working together that we can build a more resilient community that is able to not just weather external events, but prosper as well.

#### OUR STAFF

Midlas staff are the experts in what they do. Without their dedication to their clients, their innovative ideas, their collaborative skills and their willingness to grow and learn, Midlas would not be able to build resilient communities as effectively as we do today.

Our staff truly embody a learning organisational culture, and I'm proud to publicly acknowledge our staff on behalf of the Midlas Board, for their efforts across the last 12 months.

Change is always the one constant in life, and regeneration brings with it great opportunity. As part of the changes over the last year I would like to welcome our new CEO, Gaelle Gouillou to Midlas. Gaelle brings a depth of knowledge and experience as well as a genuine desire to build on the Midlas foundation, and we wish her the best in the coming years.

#### MIDLAS BOARD

On behalf of the Midlas staff and clients, I would like to thank the ongoing efforts of the Midlas Board. Each Board Director has a skill set that is truly valued and has enabled Midlas to have best practice governance and adaptability.

I truly believe Midlas is on a continued path of creating enduring resilience in our community, and I am excited to see what lays in store in the future for the organisation.

Simon Kimber  
Board Chair



## CEO'S REPORT

### GAELE GOUILLOU

**Midlas proudly plays a leading role in advocating and supporting the vulnerable and less advantaged members of our community – a role needed now more than ever with continuing impacts from COVID-19 and cost of living pressures.**

Since my commencement with Midlas in April 2022, I have been encouraged by the many opportunities and exciting possibilities for the organisation and inspired by the highly dedicated and passionate staff.

There have been many challenges over the past year for the organisation and the path ahead continues to present many challenges amidst sector reforms, uncertainty of funding and the ever growing needs of the communities we support. However in the midst of all the challenges, the Midlas team have continued to service our communities with commitment and determination.

I would like to recognise and acknowledge the contributions of my predecessor, Sarah Patterson who led the organisation through its many challenges and growth over the last five years.

Staff have well and truly gone above and beyond during the past 12 months and Midlas is a richer organisation for their individual and collective endeavours. I am grateful to lead such a committed and dedicated team and thank each and every one of them including the highly committed members of our Executive Leadership team for their commitment during over the past year.

As we enter another year, we do it with a commitment to building on the extensive work continuing over thirty years with renewed and intensified focus on collaborative partnerships and relationships with our stakeholders, key influencers in government and the many community organisations and supporters within our networks.

Leading an organisation through change can be very challenging and I express my gratitude for the support of a committed and skilled Board.

Looking to the future, Midlas continues to expand its' services driven by a strong purpose to build resilient communities supporting the most vulnerable and ensuring accessible advocacy and legal support for all. While there is still very high uncertainty within the sector and significant changes across all levels, there are also many new opportunities creating an exciting chapter in Midlas' history.

The coming year will be one of strong alignment to core services, commitment to best practises for governance, risk and compliance, staff well-being and development and strong focus on collaboration.

In closing, I would like to express my deepest thanks and acknowledge the incredible work done by our staff and volunteers all of whom have contributed to a year of considerable achievements. I'd also like to express my gratitude for the strong governance support of the Board and for sharing their expertise throughout the year.

The tireless collective efforts and dedication is a testament to the unwavering commitment of all those that support Midlas as well as the wealth of experiences and capabilities that add immense value to our organisation. I am humbled by the incredible compassion and generosity shown and express our sincere appreciation for their ongoing contributions.

We are proud to share our 2021-22 Annual Report celebrating another year for Midlas and pleased to commend this report to you.

Gaelle Gouillou  
Chief Executive Officer



# PRINCIPAL SOLICITOR'S REPORT

## MARGO ZORBAS



### Duty Lawyer Service

To keep up with demand for legal assistance in restraining order matters, Midlas has recently expanded its Duty Lawyer Service at Midland Magistrates Court. Each Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, our Duty Lawyer assists applicants with restraining order matters. Generally, this takes the form of conducting shuttle-style negotiations between the parties to resolve the matter by consent prior to the matter being heard by the Court.

### Legal Advice Clinic

In addition to the expansion of existing services, Midlas' legal team has also instituted a new initiative this financial year to pivot and meet demand. The aftershocks of the pandemic have seen demand for pro bono legal services significantly increase across the sector. To assist in meeting this demand, Midlas now has a Legal Advice Clinic each Wednesday morning for family law and family violence matters.

Six matters per week are triaged at intake and allocated to the Clinic according to urgency and suitability. With the benefit of timely and easily accessible legal advice, we have found that the trajectory of these matters can be altered in the early stages for the better.

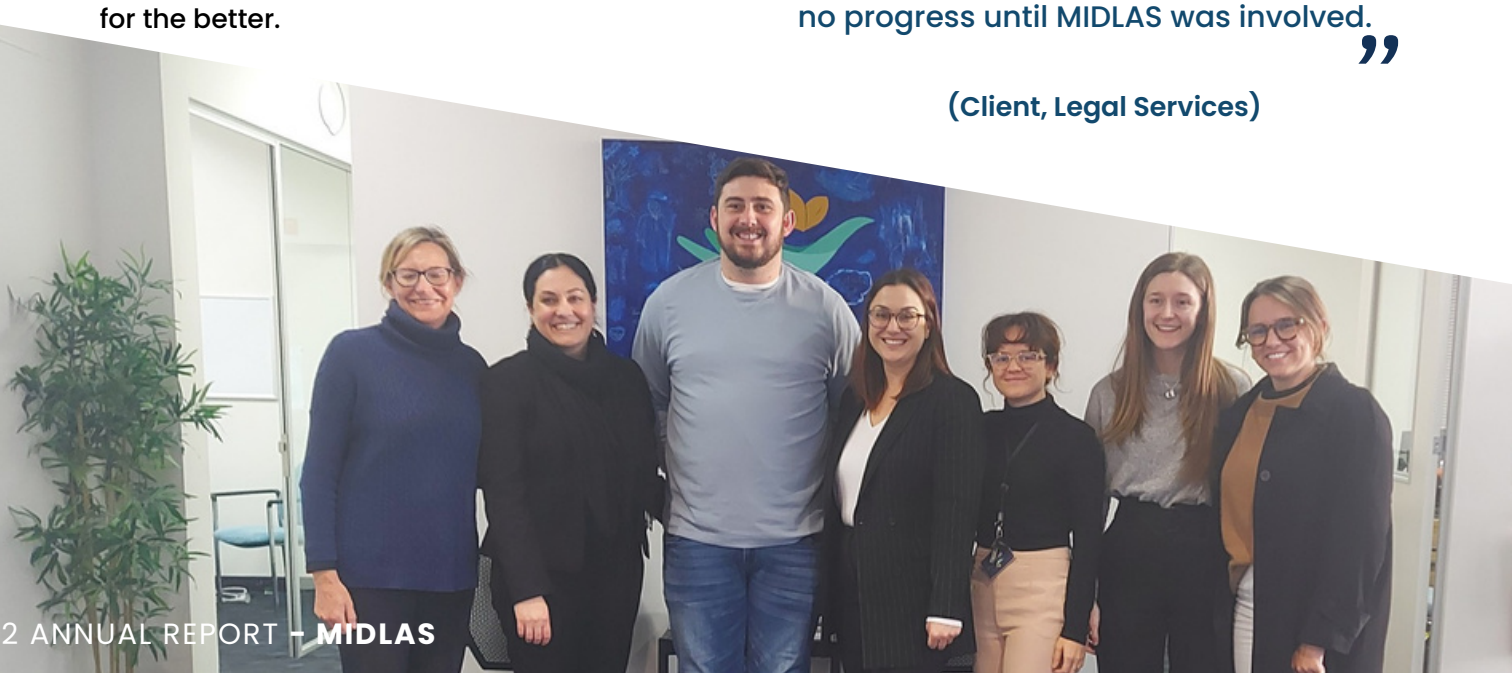
### Our Pro-Bono Relationships

With the passing of another financial year, our team wishes to extend its gratitude to our pro-bono partners. The work that they do, and the support which is offered to Midlas and its clients, makes a significant difference to the lives of some of the most vulnerable members of our community.

A particular highlight for Midlas this year was the opportunity to host a Wills Clinic, in conjunction with Gilbert + Tobin, for our First Nations clients. It was a huge success, which saw Wills, Powers of Attorney and Enduring Powers of Guardianship drafted for Midlas clients by a top-tier, national law firm. These services were provided completely free of charge. We thank Gilbert + Tobin for this incredible opportunity to collaborate and to give back to the community.

“ The professionalism shown to me and guidance to assist me as a sole father with two children after a crisis was invaluable. The anxiety and stress I have been under was lessened after receiving the assistance from MIDLAS. I have been trying to sort the sale of the house for 10 months with many different lawyers with no progress until MIDLAS was involved. ”

(Client, Legal Services)





## LEGAL SERVICES

- Family Law: Divorce and Separation
- Family Law: Property Matters
- Family Law: Children's Matters
- Family Violence Law Restraining Orders
- Disability Discrimination Law
- Guardianship and Administration
- Tenant Advocacy Services

“

Thank you so much for your extensive time and patience and detailed assistance getting the documents up to scratch for submission. Very professional and very helpful.

(Client, Legal Services)

”



542

Legal Case Files



1,028

Legal Advice Files



88

Duty Lawyer Services



256

Tenancy Case Files



489

Tenancy Advices

### Tenant Advocacy

Top three tenancy issues over the year:

- General rights and responsibilities
- Lease agreements
- Tenancy-related issues

Main issues by accommodation type:

- Private rental – 60.4%
- Government rental – 26.6%
- Homeless – 6.6%
- Rent-free – 1.7%
- Other – 4.7%



98% of legal clients were experiencing financial hardship



17 restraining order matters in court in one day



124 negotiated tenancy outcomes



22 litigated tenancy outcomes



51% of legal clients had dependant children

“

You have lifted an intolerable weight, carried for far too long from my aching shoulders. Thank you for the empathy that oozes through your pores. Thankyou for YOU! I will NEVER forget your wisdom and support EVER.

(Client, Tenancy Services)

”

# Duty Lawyer Service

Midlas provided a Duty Lawyer service at the Midland Magistrates court every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday to support applicants with restraining order matters in response to community needs following increases in family domestic violence rates. Midlas' duty lawyers worked alongside its' family domestic advocate providing support with warm referral pathways to internal and external support services. These enhanced linkages between the justice processes and support services significantly improved the availability and awareness of services for victims assisting to overcome barriers to ensure access to support and further reduce risk of violence.

## Impact of Service

Clients avoided further violence and made positive changes for their life and well-being

**75%**

Clients supported with an application for a family violence restraining order

**60%**

Clients accessing Midlas Family Law Services experiencing family violence

**40%**



“

Your support has given me the opportunity to be a better parent, the parent I always wanted to be.

**(Mother of two young children, supported to gain an FVRO)**

Everything looked impossible, you guys listened without judgement and held my hand through the process. It wasn't impossible. Thank you.

**(Mother of three young children, supported to gain an FVRO now and engaged with Midlas Family Legal Services, Financial Counselling and mental health services)**

I am here because of the support that I get from Midlas.

**(Client supported by Midlas' FDV Advocate, Family Lawyer, Disability Advocate and Financial Counsellor)**

”









# Disability Advocacy Services

- NDIS Access & NDIS Appeals
- Internal & External Reviews
- Disability Royal Commission
- General Disability Advocacy
- Outreach support for street present communities

## Service Challenges

The service has supported communities against an increase in the number of appeals lodged challenging the NDIS decisions and increasing number of participants in the scheme. The service has supported communities with challenges relating to long time-frames for plan approvals and reviews, inadequate allocations of funds for services and supports and inconsistency of plans between participants.

While the challenges persist, the service recognises and supports opportunities to meet these challenges supporting communities across all levels of advocacy to promote, protect, uphold and defend the human rights and well-being of people with disabilities.

## Disability Advocacy



79 Disability Royal Commission submissions



491 Disability Advocacy Advice Files



150 Supported External Merit Reviews



144 Disability Advocacy Case Files



184 Clients supported through the Disability Street Project

“

Thank you for everything you have done for us. If it wasn't for yourself I don't know where I would be. It has definitely been a hard journey and it will have its challenges.

(Client, Disability Advocacy Services) ”



“

Thank you very much for all of your dedicated guidance and thoroughness assisting with our NDIA assistance application. It is wonderful news that she now has that invaluable assistance moving forward. My words are unable to express my thanks and gratitude. So on behalf of our entire family thank you many times over.

(Client, Disability Advocacy Services)

”

# Disability Royal Commission

## Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability

### The Disability Royal Commission

The Disability Royal Commission was established in April 2019 in response to community concern about widespread reports of violence against, and the neglect, abuse and exploitation of, people with disability.

### Delivering Individual Advocacy

Midlas has supported individuals affected by the Royal Commission with information on how to participate and the best way to tell their story.

People affected by the Royal Commission have been supported to share their stories with the Commission to:

- understand the extent of the problem
- learn more about the contexts in which abuse is more likely to occur
- understand the impacts on people with disability, their families, support people and our community
- gather information relevant to their investigations and research program.

Individuals have been supported to make submissions through a range of methods to best support their needs with the guidance and support of a legal team with disability and human rights expertise.



“ It’s important to change the attitude of society around negative expectations of people with disability...It’s about attitude. Educating and providing opportunities is vital. ”

(Dr Rita Kleinfeld-Fowell, Midlas Senior Solicitor, DeafBlind WA Chair and Member of the Ministerial Advisory Council on Disability for the Hon. Don Punch, Minister for Disability Services)





# Your Story Disability





# FINANCIAL COUNSELLING & CAPABILITY

## Financial Counselling

Midlas' Financial Counsellors have been supporting communities against the continuing impacts from COVID-19 and increasing cost of living pressures.

The service's Ellenbrook office recently relocated to central Ellenbrook on Main Street to provide improved working facilities, client access and visibility. Networks with local members and other not-for-profit services have also brought collaborative opportunities to support communities.

The services provides support with creditor negotiation, advocacy with agencies and information on personal financial issues including debt recovery, developing budget plans and bankruptcy.

## Financial Capability & Wellbeing

Midlas' Financial Capability team has been recognised for innovative service delivery on financial literacy education and coaching. The service delivers the highly impactful Work and Development Permit Scheme and provides support to strengthen financial capacity and resilience.

“...you are an exemplary teacher and information engager, as most people were engaged and understood your content. You understand that we're all just people and helped to clear the fog around so many important (often stressful) things for so many people.”  
(Client, Work and Development Permit Scheme)



**594**

Number of Cases



**626**

Number of Clients



**\$83,380,042**

Presenting Debt



**\$1,303,542**

Debt Waived







**WELCOME**  
**ALL AGES**  
**ALL SIZES**  
**ALL COLOURS**  
**ALL GENDERS**  
**ALL CULTURES**  
**ALL BELIEFS**  
**ALL RELIGIONS**  
**ALL ABILITIES**  
**ALL PEOPLE**  
**SAFE HERE**

**STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS**  
Adapted for people with cognitive disability by CHS  
Illustrations by CHS

**PROCESS FOR NDIS?**  
Not sure what to do or what to expect?  
Midlas is a **FREE** advocacy service that can help:  
✓ Prepare for the meeting  
✓ Understand what documents and evidence you need  
✓ Attend the meeting with you, and  
✓ Negotiate for a better plan.  
Contact our experienced Advocacy now on:  
(08) 9250 2123 or [admin@midlas.org.au](mailto:admin@midlas.org.au)

**midlas**  
building resilience  
**MIDLAS Disability Hub**  
**Drop-in Clinic**  
NDIS and DSP application support  
Every Monday 9.30-12.30 (except Public Holidays)  
14 Stafford Street, MIDLAND 6202  
20-minute advice only sessions with an Advocate.  
Bring all relevant documents with you.

**midlas**  
Free Advocacy Support  
This document provides information about the services provided by Midlas. It is intended to be used as a guide only. For more information, please contact Midlas on (08) 9250 2123 or [admin@midlas.org.au](mailto:admin@midlas.org.au).

**SafeWA**  
Do your part to keep WA safe



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & OUTREACH

## Midlas Community Engagement

Midlas provides high levels of community engagement across all our services. Regular exposure across news-print, radio talk-back, news-film and online media has supported community education and awareness. Services regularly engage on topics including financial literacy, legal issues such as FDV and elder abuse, advocacy support for people with disabilities and supporting initiatives and causes to effect systemic changes across these sectors.

## Outreach Services and Support

Midlas provides outreach services through Mobile Midlas and outreach team. The services engage with street-present and transient communities, as well as community members who may face challenges in attending more traditional in-office appointments.



“ It’s about the trust, the relationship. She believes in me with no judgement. I’ve only ever spoken to 3 people in my life about my traumas, and history, she is one of them. Having someone who will sit and listen to me is so important. It’s nice knowing that every Tuesday, no matter how my week has been, she will be there, giving me accountability, and support, without judgement.  
(Client , Disability Street Project.) ”



**78**

Engaged survivors  
of FDV



**64**

Clients supported with  
FVRO's and Safety Plans



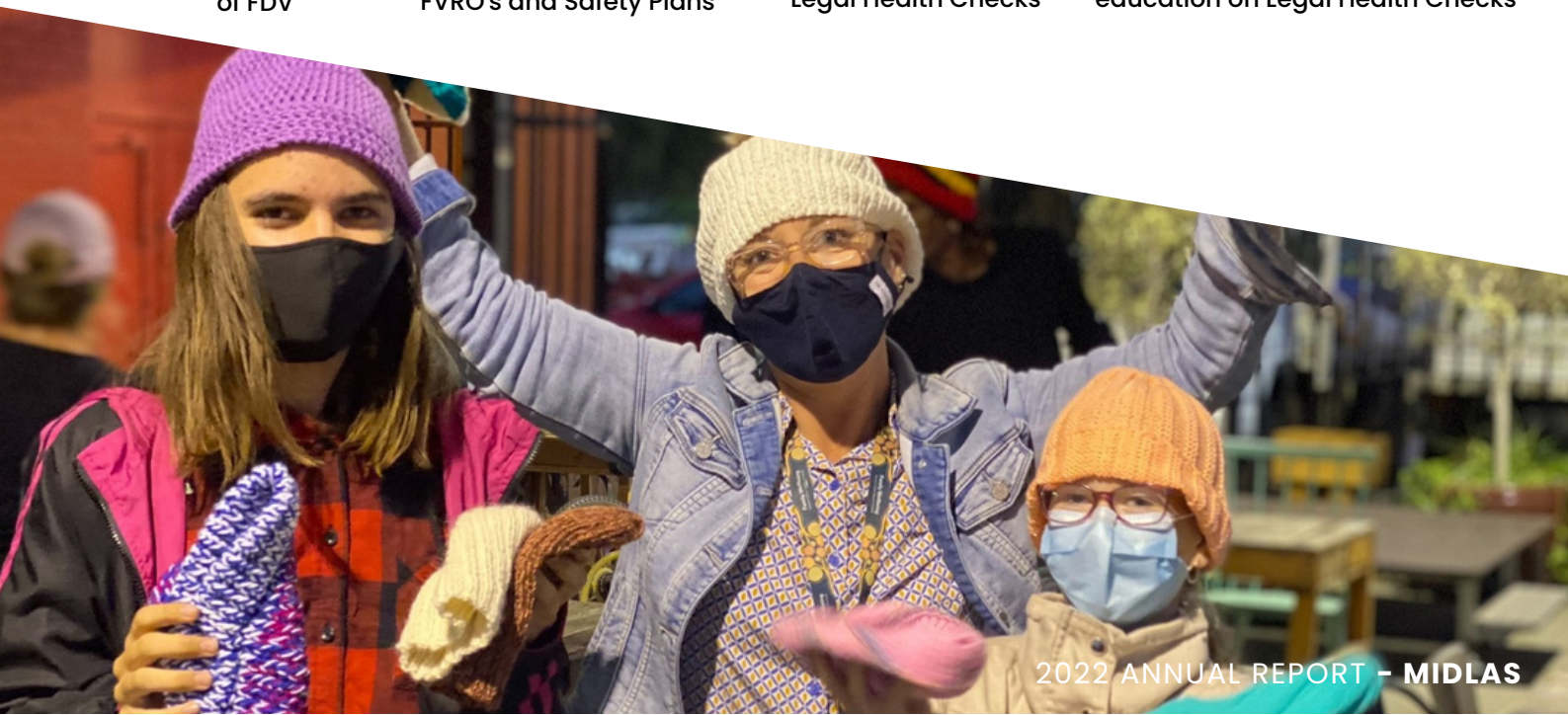
**24**

Information Sessions on  
Legal Health Checks



**567**

Participants engaged in  
education on Legal Health Checks







facebook



WE STAND WITH THE  
LGBTQIA+ COMMUNITY



# IDAHOBIT  MAY 17







# mobilemidlas

## driving resilience



Disability Advocacy  
NDIS Access and Appeals  
Disability Discrimination Law  
Disability Royal Commission Support  
Financial Counselling  
Financial Capability & Wellbeing  
Family Law  
Community Outreach  
Criminal Injuries Compensation Claims  
Family Violence Restraining Orders  
Tenant Advocacy  
Work and Development Permit Scheme

Ph: 9250 2123  
Email: [admin@midlas.org.au](mailto:admin@midlas.org.au)  
Web: [www.midlas.org.au](http://www.midlas.org.au)

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**Impact100**  
western australia



### Mobile Midlas

Midlas provides outreach services through Mobile Midlas. We engage our community and partner agencies in order to raise awareness of available services and support. The ultimate aim of our outreach program is to provide inclusive and accessible services to all members of our community.



# RECOGNITION

## FINANCIAL COUNSELLOR'S ASSOCIATION OF WA 2021 AWARDS

Midlas' Financial Capability Coordinator awarded the Ian Macdonald's Contribution to the Sector Award for Excellent Trauma Informed Practice Skills in the Field of Financial Capability 2021 Awards



### Junior Woman Lawyer of the Year

The Junior Woman Lawyer of the Year Award recognises women who have been admitted to practice law for less than 5 years.

Nominees:

Anne Marie Ricciardi  
Briony Whyte  
Felicia Chan  
Jade Tunnercliffe  
Karess Dias

## WOMEN LAWYER OF THE YEAR AWARDS 2021

Midlas' Senior Solicitor, Anne-Marie Ricciardi and Solicitor Jade Tunnercliffe nominated for the Junior Woman Lawyer of the Year Awards 2022



### Certificate of Recognition

#### Midlas Disability Team

Julie Bloomfield, Jennifer James,  
Sally Denton, Joanne Maclean,  
Ann McFayden, Gavin Currie,  
Megan Uithalder, Helen Taplin  
Excellence in Innovation  
Award Nominee



## WA DISABILITY SUPPORT AWARDS 2021

Midlas' Disability Advocacy Services nominated for the Excellence in Innovation Award through WA Disability Support Awards 2021





# TREASURER'S REPORT

## DEEPAK SHARMA

**The Financial year 2021/22 has been a challenging but eventful year for Midlas.**

The organisation has continued to provide great service while the effects of COVID still cast a shadow on the overall business. Midlas had to adjust to changes in government policy and changing demand for our services. The overall revenues were maintained to the near previous year levels through increase in grant income during the year. The other income however declined as the Government policy around COVID relief was rolled back.

Midlas saw a change in its top management early last year. Amidst this season of change and Covid induced uncertainty, Midlas has been able to manage itself financially to maintain effective performance. The organisation undertook reconciliation of the accounts and wrote-off some grants that were brought forward and accelerated depreciation of some of the asset items. As a result of the adjustments Midlas on reported an overall deficit of \$347,660 for the financial year. However this sets the organisation on a good path based on a long-term view of its financial health.

Midlas has sufficient funds to meet its liabilities as and when they fall due, with a total cash balance as at 30 June 2022 of \$1.834 million. This includes two term deposits of \$300,000 each. I note that these funds are still accessible at short notice if they were needed. At the same time total liabilities measure \$1.333 million.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognise and commend the new management including Chief Financial Officer, Serge Sasic for his proactive approach and maintaining financial control on Midlas finances.

The financial accounts and acquittal statement were audited by Armada Auditing.

Deepak Sharma  
Treasurer

# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

## TOTAL ASSETTS

2022	2021
\$2,157,586	\$2,994,236



## TOTAL LIABILITIES

2022	2021
\$1,332,924	\$1,821,917



## ANNUAL (DEFICIT)/SURPLUS

2022	2021
(\$337,660)	\$575,160

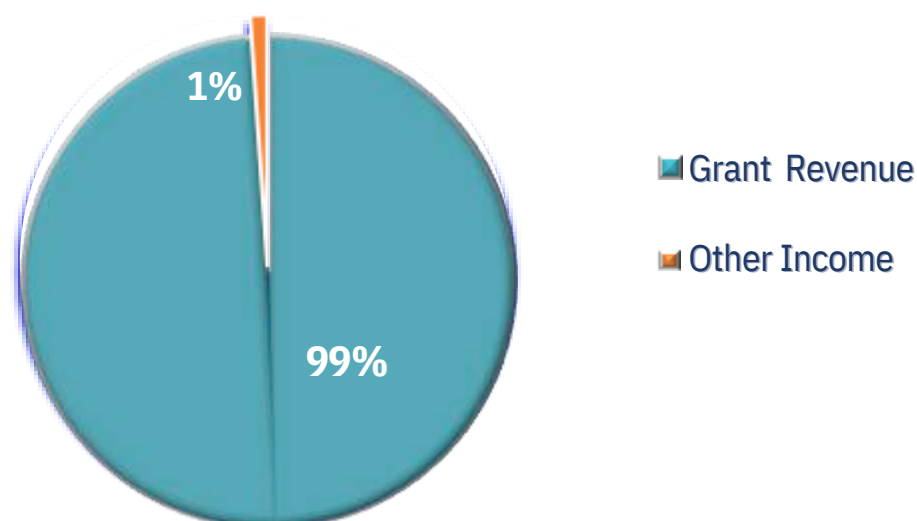


## TOTAL EQUITY

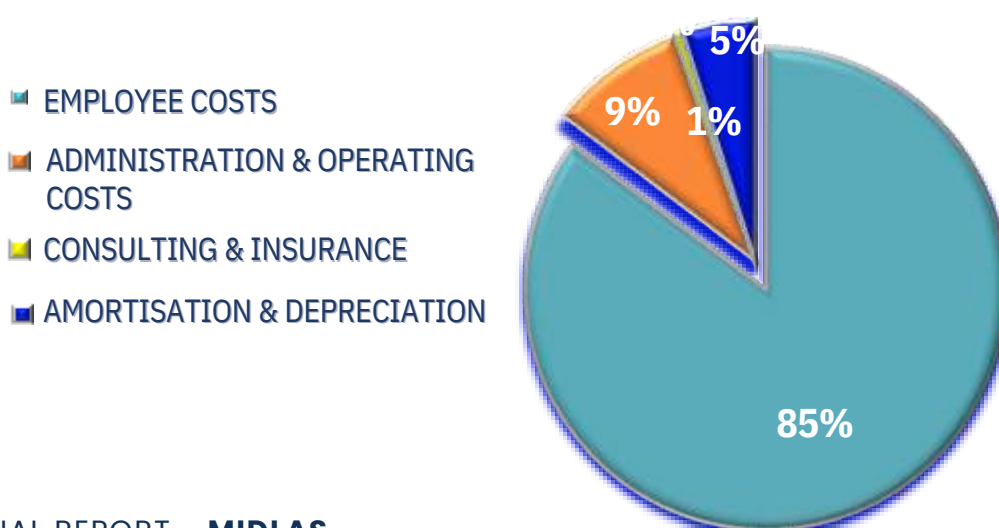
2022	2021
\$824,662	\$1,172,322



## REVENUE – HOW THE MONEY WAS EARNED



## EXPENSES – HOW THE MONEY WAS SPENT







## IN APPRECIATION

With sincere thanks to all our funding bodies, partners and supporters.





# midlas

building resilience

**MIDLAND HEAD OFFICE**

12 OLD GREAT NORTHERN HIGHWAY  
MIDLAND WA 6056

**MIDLAND OFFICE**

14 STAFFORD STREET  
MIDLAND WA 6056

**ELLENBROOK OFFICE**

38 MAIN STREET  
ELLENBROOK WA 6069

**08 9250 2123**

**[midlas.org.au](http://midlas.org.au)**



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[au.linkedin.com/company/midlas](https://au.linkedin.com/company/midlas)

